

DETAILED ACTION

Reasons For Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art of reference has failed to disclose or suggest a method for providing a surgical access through an intercostal incision comprising engaging a rib superiorly adjacent to the intercostal incision with a first rib engaging blade; engaging a rib inferiorly adjacent to the intercostal incision and inferiorly opposing the rib superiorly adjacent to the intercostal incision with a second rib engaging blade; and driving the rib superiorly adjacent to the intercostal incision and the rib inferiorly adjacent to the intercostal incision apart and lifting one of the rib superiorly adjacent to the intercostal incision and the rib inferiorly adjacent to the intercostal incision relative to the other.

Claims 115-119, 122-126 are allowed.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance.".

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Vy Q. Bui whose telephone number is 571-272-4692. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jackie Ho can be reached on 571-272-4692. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Vy Q. Bui/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3773